
T H E
P R E F A C E.

DURING the struggles of a great nation for her safety, or renown, conjunctures often arise, when the citizen, whose station does not admit of his giving advice, ought to offer his informations. The present [1782] seemed to be such a time. And the Compiler of the following sheets, having collected for a greater work various documents with regard to the national resources, thought it his duty to make an humble tender to the public of that authentic intelligence, which, amidst the wailings of despondency, had brought conviction and comfort to his own mind.

Little have they studied the theory of man, or observed his familiar life, who have not remarked, that the individual finds the highest gratification in deploring the felicities of the past, even amidst the pleasures of the present. Prompted thus by temper, he has in every age complained of its decline and depopulation, while the world was the most populous, and its affairs the most prosperous. Yet, is there reason to hope, that as sound philosophy triumphs over ill-founded prejudices, the people of these islands will become less subject to the dominion of periodical apprehensions, far less to the lasting impressions of fancied misery.

The reader, who honours the following sheets with an attentive perusal, may probably find, that though we have advanced, by wide steps, during the last century, in the science of politics, we have still much to learn; but that the summit can only be gained, by substituting accurate research for delusive speculation, and by rejecting zeal of paradox, for moderation of opinion.